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Cal Poly Center for Sustainability

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Cal Poly to Host Sustainable Pest Management Conference Dec. 2-3 in San Luis Obispo

Secretary of California Department of Food and Agriculture to Speak

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly and California Certified Organic Farmers will host the 10th annual Sustainable Pest Management Conference at the San Luis Obispo Veterans' Hall on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 2-3.

Karen Ross, secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), will kick off the event with a talk titled "How CDFA's Budget Impacts Pest Management in California." Ross has extensive leadership experience in agricultural issues nationally, internationally and in California.

The conference agenda includes topics related to California's approach to integrated pest management, including tools for organic production practices, biologically integrated pest control, pesticide resistance management, beneficial soil organisms, and updates on important regulatory issues.

The event is open to anyone interested in sustainable agriculture, including growers, pest control advisers, certified crop advisers and other agricultural consultants. Participants will enhance their skills in innovative pest management practices for organic and sustainable agriculture and will earn up to 12.5 continuing education units for pest control advisers and certified crop advisers.

Day one of the conference will include a special panel on "Managing California's Agricultural Pests – Moving Beyond Controversy to Cooperation." The panel will address challenges in balancing public perception, scientific research and risk analyses in state programs for plant pest eradication. Panel members include:

- Helene R. Wright, California State Plant Health director, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- Betsy K. Peterson, director, Technical Services, California Association Nurseries and Garden Centers
- Andrea Fox, legislative policy analyst – Governmental Affairs, California Farm Bureau Federation/member of California Invasive Species Advisory Council
- Margareta (Greta) Lelea, post-doctoral researcher in Entomology and Human and Community Development, UC Davis; and Jen Sedell, student in Human and Community Development, UC Davis

· Robert Leavitt, director, Plant Administration, Division of Plant Health, CDFA

· Caroline Cox, research director, Center for Environmental Health

The second day includes a practical workshop at Cal Poly focused on soil, water and pesticide residue testing. This includes hands-on sampling techniques and instruction on how best to interpret soil, tissue and water reports.

In addition, this workshop will address how to assess maximum residue levels for pesticides (MRLs), including information on MRL expectations of the Global Food Safety Initiative, which aims to improve food safety systems.

The conference registration fee is \$150 for Dec. 2 and \$75 for Dec. 3. Registration for both days is \$200. Fees include meals and materials. Student rates are also available.

For more information, or to register, visit <http://www.continuing-ed.calpoly.edu/programs/pestmanagement.html>, call 805-756-2053, or email conted@calpoly.edu.

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